



OICOA

OMBUDSMAN ASSOCIATION

DEC 2023, VOLUME-I, ISSUE-IV

NEWSLETTER

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Editorial Team

Tauseef Ahmed Qureshi

Abdul Ghani

Fatima Akram

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Esteemed Members,

I am pleased to announce that the 5th Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for January 29, 2024, followed by the conference on January 30, 2024.

As the Chief Ombudsman of the Republic of Türkiye and the President of the OICOA, I extend a warm welcome to all participants for the upcoming 9th Board of Directors Meeting and the 3rd General Assembly Meeting, set to take place on 05th-06th October 2023 in the historic city of Istanbul, Türkiye.

These gatherings transcend mere meetings; they represent a confluence of shared visions dedicated to fostering the esteemed principles of Ombudsmanship on a global stage. Our collective ambition is to uphold justice, fairness, accountability, and the protection of human rights.

I eagerly anticipate the pivotal discussions on expanding OICOA's membership, echoing our joint commitment to enhancing its impact and reach. Additionally, these meetings will highlight the significant role that Islamic states play in strengthening the ethos of Ombudsmanship, sending a powerful message of unity, justice, and equity worldwide.



I look forward to the camaraderie, exchange of insightful ideas, and meaningful deliberations that will unfold during our meetings. Together, let's make these sessions a significant milestone for OICOA, paving the way for a global outreach resonating with the core principles of justice and equity.

Şeref MALKOÇ
(Chief Ombudsman of the
Republic of Türkiye)
President OICOA



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SECRETARY GENERAL'S MESSAGE

I am delighted to share the 'FOURTH ISSUE' of OICOA e-Newsletter, embodying the core principle of accountability rooted in the Islamic concept. Our commitment at OICOA extends to the fight against maladministration, protection of human rights and the promotion of good governance, believing that a peaceful society contributes to a peaceful world. Achieving the agenda of peaceful coexistence requires transparency, adherence to the rule of law, and a just system for addressing grievances – a responsibility we shoulder with unwavering commitment and resilience.

It gives me immense pleasure to announce that the 5th Board of Directors' Meeting of the OICOA will be held on 29th and 30th January 2024 in Islamabad. I feel honoured to host this tremendous event in Pakistan and look forward to receiving the honourable ombudsman/ombudspersons and their delegation in Pakistan, a country with a rich culture, heritage, history and traditions.

As we share the "December Newsletter" of OICOA, our hearts go out to our Palestinian brethren of Gaza. The brutal attacks and killings of the innocent Palestinian Muslims have not been stopped since 78 days. Horrendously, 19,453 Palestinians have been killed so far in Israeli attacks since October 7, 2023. OICOA calls upon the UNO and Human Rights Organisations to bring all perpetrators of this unfortunate act to justice.



Ceasefire should be immediately implemented as per Security Council resolution and all international NGOs, be allowed to work for the rescue, relief and rehabilitation of the affectees of War. With the support of member countries, we can build and fortify our association. May our actions be guided by the principles of justice, righteousness and peace.

Dr. Asif Mehmood Jah
(Hilal-i-Imaz) (Sitara-i-Imaz)
Federal Tax Ombudsman of Pakistan
Secretary General, OICOA



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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

Dear Members of the OIC Ombudsman Association,

The December Edition of the OICOA Newsletter is continuation of our commitment to get all the members of OICOA engaged and well informed about the latest developments and events held at the member Ombudsman Institutes.

I am delighted to announce the upcoming 10th Board of Directors Meeting scheduled for January 28 and 29, hosted by Pakistan. Pakistan is rich in its culture and traditions and flag bearer of notion of Muslim unity as the country played significant role in the establishment of Organisation of Islamic countries in 1988.

The primary objective of this newsletter is to enhance communication and collaboration among our esteemed members, providing the latest insights and advancements in the field of ombudsman services. We've established a dedicated website and social media accounts for OICOA.

I extend a cordial invitation for you to actively engage with this newsletter by sharing your feedback, suggestions, expertise, success stories, and research with fellow members. Let's harness the collective wisdom within our association, fostering a vibrant exchange of ideas and creating a sense of community.



We have developed a dedicated webpage, disseminating regular newsletter and gaining momentum of establishing a research centre as well.

Our association's strength lies in our collective dedication to upholding the principles of integrity, accountability, and fairness. Together, we can build a valuable resource that mirrors the diversity and expertise within our association.

Almas Ali Jovindah
Executive Secretary, OICOA



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UPCOMING EVENTS

A. 10TH BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS OF OIC OMBUDSMAN ASSOCIATION (OICOA) TO BE HELD AT ISLAMABAD ON 28-29 JANUARY 2024 .

The upcoming 10th Board of Directors Meeting of the OIC Ombudsman Association is scheduled to take place on the 28th and 29th of January 2023. This significant gathering will unfold in the culturally vibrant nation of Pakistan, specifically in its capital city, Islamabad. Renowned for its historical significance and scenic beauty, Islamabad provides an ideal backdrop for the deliberations and discussions that will shape the future course of the OIC Ombudsman Association. The meeting aims to bring together key stakeholders, fostering collaboration and strategic planning to enhance the association's effectiveness in addressing ombudsman-related matters within the member countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). With its diverse cultural heritage and hospitable ambiance, Pakistan is poised to offer a warm and conducive environment for productive dialogues during this pivotal board meeting.





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HON'BLE BANKING MOHTASIB MR. SIRAJUDDIN AZIZ

The appointment of Mr. Sirajuddin Aziz as Banking Mohtasib for a period of four years was notified by the Ministry of Law and Justice on July 4, 2023. The Hon'ble Ombudsman Mr. Sirajuddin Aziz brings a lot of banking experience to his new assignment. He is a professionally qualified and experienced banker, who has worked for different organizations in Pakistan, China, Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, Nigeria and the United Arab Emirates. He was the President & Chief Executive Officer at Habib Metro Bank. Prior to this, he also served as the Chief Executive Officer of Bank Al Falah from 2007-2011. By virtue of being a senior member of banks' Management Teams/ Committees, he has been actively involved in overseeing the entire spectrum of banking operations of various banks for over 15 years. His last assignment was as the Chief Executive Officer of all Financial Institutions, Habib Bank AG Zurich.

He is a Fellow of the Institute of Bankers Pakistan (IBP). He was also the Editor of the Journal of IBP for over a decade. Mr. Sirajuddin Aziz is a Fellow of Institute of Bankers Pakistan (IBP). He was also the Editor of the Journal of IBP for over a decade. He is also a Member of Pakistan Institute of International Affairs and of the English-Speaking Union of Pakistan.



He serves on the Board of Governors of various educational institutions and social organizations and is a regular speaker at prestigious universities and professional forums, where he conducts sessions on a diverse range of subjects.

Mr. Sirajuddin Aziz is a regular contributor to national and international dailies, journals and magazines on varied subjects. He actively participates in televised debates on economy, education and social issues. He is an accomplished author, with published works comprising "In Quest of Mirage", "Bitter & Sweet – Life & Times of Dad", "Surab ki Talash Mein", "The Essence of Islam" and "Emerging Dynamics of Management", "Handbook for Effective Management" and "Corporate Pakistan (Insight into leadership)".



OICOA MEMBERS ACTIVITIES

INSTITUTION OF THE MEDIATOR OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO

TRAINING SESSION ON WHISTLEBLOWERS PROTECTION AND FIGHTING AGAINST CORRUPTION

The Center of Training and Exchange on Mediation, hosted by the Institution of the Mediator of the Kingdom of Morocco, has organized on the 21st and 22nd November 2023, in partnership with both AOM and AOMF, a joint training session for collaborators of mediators' members of these two associations, on the theme: « Whistleblowers Protection and Fighting Against Corruption ».

The training was distinguished by the participation of 32 participants from Mediators and Ombudsman institutions, members of the two associations, coming from 18 countries: Albania - Belgium - Benin - Canada - Ivory-Coast - Egypt - France - Gabon - Georgia - Italy - Luxembourg - Malta - Senegal - Seychelles - Serbia - Togo - Turkey and Morocco. 7 experts from Belgium, Canada, France, Malta, and Morocco supervised the training.



During the opening session, Mr. Mohamed BENALILOU, the Mediator of the Kingdom of Morocco, gave an inaugural address framing the topic, in which he highlighted the basic pillars surrounding it and how to address it, not only by limiting it to its legal aspect, but also covering the topic from many other aspects, while raising major questions for discussion, the most important of which are the various forms of reporting. He also called to induce ideas that support the gains of the Ombudsman institutions and push them to delve into this topic in depth and make it part of their work plans because it flows and is linked to the content of their message, which carries the principles of integrity and transparency in the public service.

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HON'BLE CHIEF OMBUDSMAN MR. SEREF MALKOÇ

PRESIDENT OICOA & CHIEF OMBUDSMAN OF TÜRKİYE MR MALKOÇ PARTICIPATED THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE HELD IN MALTA

Upon the invitation of the Parliamentary Ombudsman of Malta, Judge Emeritus Joseph Zammit McKeon, Chief Ombudsman Mr. Şeref Malkoç and the accompanying delegation paid a visit to Malta on 31 October-1 November 2023, to participate the international conference themed "The Right to Good Administration: Myth, Aspiration or Reality?".

Mr. Malkoç made a speech on "The Right to Good Administration and the Ombudsman Institution".

During the Conference Mr. Malkoç met with the Prime Minister of Mr. Robert Abela and Main Leader of the Opposition of Malta Mr. Bernard Grech.



During his visit in Malta, Mr. Malkoç paid a visit to the Civil Protection Officers who provided invaluable support following the earthquake in Türkiye. The Parliamentary Ombudsman of Malta, Judge McKeon and Ambassador of Türkiye Mr. Erdeniz Şen, was also present. During his visit to Malta, Chief Ombudsman Mr. Malkoç also participated to the Reception realized on the occasion of the 100th year of the Republic of Türkiye, organized by the Turkish Embassy in Malta.

Chief Ombudsman Mr. Malkoç had the opportunity of meeting with the President of Malta H.E. George Vella who was the guest of honour of the Reception. Mr. Vella mentioned about the developing cooperation between two countries and his pleasure in these terms while Mr. Malkoç stated his gratitude for Malta for their help during the earthquake disaster as well as the good relations and cooperation between the Ombudsman Institutions.



BAHRAIN OMBUDSMAN OFFICE

THE INDEPENDENT OMBUDSMAN OFFICE OF THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN HELD A DIALOGUE SYMPOSIUM

The Independent Ombudsman Office of the Kingdom of Bahrain held a dialogue symposium entitled (Promoting respect for human rights... duties and challenges) on the occasion of the anniversary of International Human Rights Day, which falls on December 10th of each year, which also coincides with the official 75th year of the International Declaration of Human Rights.

A group of participants representing several bodies attended the symposium. Ms. Ghada Hamid Habib (Ombudsman and the Head of the Prisoners and Detainees Rights Commission (PDRC)), Eng. Ali Ahmed Al-Derazi (Chairman of the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR)) and Mr. Muhammad Khaled Al-Hazza (General Directorate and Head of the Special Investigation Unit) spoke at the symposium.



The speakers addressed the process of human rights development in the Kingdom of Bahrain, in integrated paths, including the establishment of national institutions concerned with the promotion of human rights with specific specialization. They also reviewed the aspects of cooperation between these agencies and institutions within the legal frameworks that govern their work, and they have shared the challenges that faced their work, including how to gain public trust and spread a culture of respect for human rights, and its relations with civil society organizations. The symposium also showed a documentary film about the work of the Independent Ombudsman Office since its establishment, and another film about the role of the United Nations in relation to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its most important provisions. Ms. Ghada Hamid Habib confirmed that the purpose of holding this symposium is for the world to participate in celebrating the anniversary of International Human Rights Day, through an open dialogue that includes cognitive and cultural content related to the topic of human rights, which is among the functional missions.



COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATION AND THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS CYPRUS

Ombudsmen serve as vital independent public institutions or individuals in many countries with the purpose of safeguarding the rights and interests of citizens and society. Religious rights hold a significant place among these rights, and Ombudsmen play a crucial role in their protection.

First of all, what are religious rights and why are they so important? Religious rights include the freedom of individuals to worship according to their beliefs, perform religious rituals, change their faith, or express their beliefs. These rights are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international documents. Freedom of religion and belief is cornerstone of democratic societies, allowing people to freely practice their faith. Ombudsmen play a significant role in protecting these religious rights because they are independent and impartial. In cases where people's religious rights are violated, Ombudsmen can examine and investigate complaints, and ensure the protection of these rights. They also play an effective role in combating discrimination.



Discrimination is often associated with the violation of religious rights. Ombudsmen listen to the complaints of individuals who have experienced discrimination and evaluate these complaints. If discrimination exists, they identify it and take the necessary steps. They provide support to those who have experienced discrimination and work to uphold the principle of equality, thus contributing to a fair society based on the principle of equality. The role of Ombudsmen in protecting religious rights contributes to the diversification and tolerance of societies. Individuals who can freely practice their beliefs create happier and healthier societies. The role of Ombudsmen in combating discrimination is also crucial for maintaining social peace.

Bearing in mind all of these factors, when we look at the legislation of our own country, namely the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), we can see that there are significant regulations related to religious rights. First and foremost, it is clear that international regulations such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights have been incorporated into our legislation and their binding nature has been ensured.

Furthermore, when we look at the TRNC Constitution which is at the top of the hierarchy of norms, we first see the regulation under Article 8 on the right to equality.



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PRESIDENT IOI ASIA REGION MR. SOMSAK SUWANSUJARIT VISITED PAKISTAN

At the invitation of the Honourable Ombudsman Sindh, Mr. Ajaz Ali Khan, President IOI Asia Region and Chief Ombudsman Honorable Mr. Somsak Suwansujarit along with his wife Mrs. Nipa Suwansujarit visited Karachi (Pakistan) on 28 November 2023 to 01 December 2023. The Thai Ombudsman along with his wife visited the Office of the Ombudsman Sindh on 29 and 30 November, 2023. During the visit he planted a palm tree in the garden of the Office of Ombudsman Sindh and jointly inaugurated the newly constructed block. At the Office of Provincial Ombudsman Sindh the dignitary was given briefing by the Honourable Ombudsman on the working of the Ombudsman Secretariat besides Registrar POS, Mr. Masood Ishrat also made a power point presentation on the occasion. At the conclusion of the meeting souvenirs were exchanged between the dignitaries.

The Thai Chief Ombudsman had meetings with Honourable Governor Sindh Mr. Muhammad Kamran Khan Tessori and Chief Minister Sindh Mr. Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar. The Governor Sindh hosted a dinner in the honour of Thai Ombudsman and his wife. The high point of Thai Ombudsman visit was the signing of MoU at the Chief Minister Secretariat. At the dinner hosted by the Honourable Ombudsman Sindh at Sindh Govt Officers' Club (SGOC). Dr. Kaleemullah Lashari made a presentation on "Cultural Heritage of Sindh". The Thai Ombudsman also visited the Quaid's Mausoleum, Mohatta Palace Museum,



National Museum of Pakistan and Trinity Church. The dignitaries were also entertained with camel ride at the Sea View Beach. The couple thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Mr. Somsak Suwansujarit profusely thanked the Honourable Ombudsman Sindh for the gracious hospitality extended to him and his wife.



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OIC OMBUDSMAN FROM PAKISTAN

WAFAQI MOHTASIB

NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS TO REACH ALL TIME HIGH FIGURE OF 190,000.

Wafaqi Mohtasib Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi has directed the investigation officers and the heads of federal agencies to ensure timely implementation of Wafaqi Mohtasib Decisions and no slackness in this regard will be tolerated. He updated that 178000 complaints have so far been decided since January 2023 and the number of complaints may touch an all time high figure of 190000 by the end 2023.

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2024

*OICOA Secretariat wishes
esteemed readers a very
HAPPY NEW YEAR
filled with happiness and
success*

FOSPAH

FEDERAL OMBUDSPERSON FOR PROTECTION AGAINST HARASSMENT HELD AN EVENT AT PRESIDENT'S HOUSE (AIWAN-E-SADR).

The Federal Ombudsperson Secretariat for Protection against Harassment (FOSPAH) is an autonomous quasi-judicial statutory body tasked with creating safe work environments by addressing abuse, intimidation and discrimination at the workplace.

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INSURANCE MOHTASIB

INSURANCE VITAL FOR WELFARE OF COMMUNITY: DR ARIF ALVI

President Dr Arif Alvi has said that insurance is highly important for welfare of the community and humanity. He said this while addressing a seminar on 'Role of Insurance Ombudsman to Strengthen Business Sector', held at Governor's House, on Saturday.

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BANKING MOHTASIB

PRESIDENT ARIF ALVI DIRECTS BANK TO REFUND RS 344,600 TO FRAUD VICTIM

The President Dr Arif Alvi has upheld the orders of Banking Mohtasib directing Allied Bank Ltd (ABL) to pay Rs 344,600 to a customer as the amount was fraudulently transferred from his account and the bank had committed maladministration by opening the fund transfer facility without his consent which caused financial loss to the customer. While deciding upon a representation filed by ABL against the decision of the Banking

Mohtasib, the President held that the bank failed to discharge the burden and statutory liability cast upon it under the law



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FEDERAL TAX OMBUDSMAN

FTO IS FULLY AUTHORIZED TO INITIATE SUO MOTO INVESTIGATION FOR ANY ALLEGED MALADMINISTRATION ON THE PART OF THE REVENUE DIVISION; HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF PAKISTAN.

These various Own Motion investigations were initiated in terms of Section 9(1) of the Federal Tax Ombudsman Ordinance, 2000 (FTO Ordinance), because FTO Secretariat had evidence-based information that some of the most meaningful and innovative initiatives of FBR's own officers

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PUNJAB OMBUDSMAN

SEMINAR ON WORLD CHILDREN'S DAY HELD AT PUNJAB OMBUDSMAN

The Office of the Ombudsman Punjab marked World Children's Day with a seminar underscoring their commitment to the well-being and rights of children. The seminar was presided over by the Hon'ble Ombudsman Punjab Maj. Azam Suleman Khan (Retd.)(Hilal-i-Imtiaz), and attended by the Advisors of the Head Office in Lahore and members of their teams.

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PUNJAB OMBUDSPERSON

OMBUDSPERSON PUNJAB HONORABLE MS.NABILA KHAN HELD AWARENESS SESSION

In the global orchestra of #16Days of Activism against gender-based violence (GBV), the Ombudsperson Punjab, under the committed leadership of Ms. Nabila Khan, stands as a beacon of hope in Pakistan. Ms. Nabila Khan raises awareness through public campaigns, workshops, and seminars, empowering communities with knowledge of women's rights



, legal frameworks, and available support mechanisms. This education is a potent weapon against GBV, chipping away at the silence and shame that often cloak its victims.

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SINDH OMBUDSMAN

MOU SIGNED BETWEEN THE PROVINCIAL OMBUDSMAN SINDH AND CHIEF OMBUDSMAN OF THAILAND

The high point of Thai Ombudsman visit to Pakistan was the signing of MoU at the Chief Minister Secretariat. The MoU seeks to establish and strengthen cooperation between the parties in order to improve their systems of handling complaints, exchange experiences, collaboration in areas of common interest and resolve the maladministration of government agencies.



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OMBUDSMAN BALOCHISTAN

OPEN COURT (KHULI KACHHEHRI) ORGANIZED IN SUBURBS OF QUETTA

In a proactive move to address community grievances and ensure swift access to justice, the Ombudsman Balochistan Mr. Nazar Muhammad Baloch orchestrated an open court session at Nawan Killi in Quetta.

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KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA OMBUDSMAN

SEMINAR ON PROVINCIAL OMBUDSMAN'S ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

Under the supervision of the Provincial Ombudsman of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, an awareness seminar was conducted regarding the roles and responsibilities of the ombudsman. Peshawar: The seminar had special guest participation from the Provincial Minister of Law and Human Rights, Justice Retired Syed Arshad Hussain Shah.

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OMBUDSPERSON OFFICE, KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

E-KHULI KACHEHRI HELD AT OMBUDSPERSON OFFICE KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

E-Kuli Kachehri was conducted under the direction of the worthy Minister, Law, Parliamentary Affairs, and Human Rights Department at the Ombudsperson Office on November 10, 2023. A total of 13 complaints were received from this office: 03 through a Google form, 02 on the helpline, and 08 through online comments.

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OMBUDSMAN OFFICE AJ&K

OMBDUSMAN AJK HELD AN OPEN COURT AT ATHMUQAM, DISTRICT NEELUM AJ&K

The Ombudsman of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Muhammad Naseem held a public open court in the Neelum Valley AJK. During the open court at PWD Guest House, Athmuqam, the complaints of the people were heard and orders were issued on the spot to solve the problems.

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OICOA AT GLANCE



1ST EVER VISIT OF THAI CHIEF OMBUDSMAN HONORABLE MR. SOMSAK SUWANSUJARIT TO SINDH (PAKISTAN)



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PRESIDENT OICOA & CHIEF OMBUDSMAN OF TÜRKİYE MR MALKOÇ PARTICIPATED THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE HELD IN MALTA



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President OICOA & Chief Ombudsman of Türkiye Mr Malkoç participated the international conference held in Malta



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held in Ankara on 11-12 January 2023.

Afterwards, our President met with the Presidents of both countries.

- We hope that we can open the *humanitarian corridor* soon, just like the grain corridor.



President OICOA & Chief Ombudsman of Türkiye participated to the EOI Conference realized in Dubai.



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Chief Ombudsman Mr. Şeref Malkoç and the accompanying delegation paid a visit to United Arab Emirates to attend the international conference on "The role of the ombudsman in protection against discrimination, with a special focus on religious rights"



Chief Ombudsman of
Türkiye participated to the
ENO 2023 Conference
realized in Brussels.



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Chief Ombudsman of Türkiye participated to the ENO 2023 Conference realized in Brussels.



Training session organized by the Presidency of the OICOA



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CONTINUATION

TRAINING SESSION ON WHISTLEBLOWERS PROTECTION AND FIGHTING AGAINST CORRUPTION

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While other speeches on the same topic tackled corruption, its dangers and harms, and the necessity of finding mechanisms to combat it by reporting all its manifestations to the various available agencies, such as the judiciary or the agencies that work under its command, as is the case in Morocco, while providing accompanying conditions.

Other presentations highlighted the ways in which mediators and ombudsman institutions engage in the integrity system in complementarity with other institutions. The participants unanimously agreed that these institutions can move forward in this field with the possibility of making reports and protecting whistleblowers.

Representatives of some institutions also presented applied cases that relied on their practices on the subject, while addressing the factors of success as well as the stumbles experienced in the reporting process, while specifying the basic tasks that should be carried out, which are accompanying, guiding, informing, and protecting.

The objectives of the training session can be summarized as follows:

- To introduce to the participants: who are the whistleblowers, what are their roles, and what is their importance, as key elements in combating corruption and achieving integrity.
- To provide participants with the necessary knowledge and tools to protect whistleblowers.
- To promote awareness of the importance of building honest and transparent institutions to combat corruption.



PAKISTAN

WAFAQI MOHTASIB

NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS TO REACH ALL TIME HIGH FIGURE OF 190,000.

Wafaqi Mohtasib Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi has directed the investigation officers and the heads of federal agencies to ensure timely implementation of Wafaqi Mohtasib Decisions and no slackness in this regard will be tolerated. He updated that 178000 complaints have so far been decided since January 2023 and the number of complaints may touch an all time high figure of 190000 by the end 2023.

Wafaqi Mohtasib was presiding over high level meeting of WM Regional Officers from Lahore, Faisalabad, Sargodha and Gujranwala, here today.

Mr Ijaz Ahmad Qureshi who was speaking to media at Lahore for the first time after having been elected as President of Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA) said that the election of Wafaqi Mohtasib as President of the AOA was a great honour for the country and recognition of Pakistan, a valuable contribution in the Asian Ombuds community.

Commending the performance of the Regional Offices, he reiterated his firm commitment of resolving issues faced by the poor masses. He said that the Wafaqi Mohtasib is a “poor man’s court” and its main purpose is to redress the grievance of oppressed and the marginalized members of the community.

He added that all efforts be undertaken by the government officials to resolve the complaints, so that relief is provided to poor strata. The Wafaqi Mohtasib while talking to media said that without allocation of additional budget and manpower, the officers of Wafaqi Mohtasib have put in their best to reach out to the public and resolved their complaints through Khulli Katchehries and IRD. He further said that the number of the complaints being received by the Wafaqi Mohtasib is increasing every year and only in 2022 WM received 164174 complaints out of which 154770 complaints were resolved.





FOSPAH

FEDERAL OMBUDSPERSON FOR PROTECTION AGAINST HARASSMENT HELD AN EVENT AT PRESIDENT'S HOUSE (AIWAN-E-SADR).

The Federal Ombudsperson Secretariat for Protection against Harassment (FOSPAH) is an autonomous quasi-judicial statutory body tasked with creating safe work environments by addressing abuse, intimidation and discrimination at the workplace. It is also authorized to adjudicate on women's property rights in Islamabad. FOSPAH, with offices in Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, and Peshawar, actively participated in the international 16 Days of Activism campaign in December 2023.

FOSPAH head office held a flagship event at the President's House (Aiwan-e-Sadr). Hon'ble President Arif Alvi and Federal Ombudsperson Ms. Fauzia Viqar, who was honoured with the 2023 Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Award for advancing gender equality in Pakistan, emphasised the necessity of eliminating gender-based violence whilst also acknowledging organizations who had taken meaningful steps to empower and uplift women across Pakistan.



The head office of FOSPAH in Islamabad also organized an informative seminar at Quaid-I-Azam University, Islamabad. Federal Ombudsperson, Ms. Fauzia Viqar provided comprehensive insights into the workplace harassment law of 2010 and outlined the procedures for university staff members and students to report such incidents.



INSURANCE MOHTASIB

INSURANCE VITAL FOR WELFARE OF COMMUNITY: DR ARIF ALVI

President Dr Arif Alvi has said that insurance is highly important for welfare of the community and humanity. He said this while addressing a seminar on 'Role of Insurance Ombudsman to Strengthen Business Sector', held at Governor's House, on Saturday. He said that collective efforts were required to increase quantum of insurance in the country for larger benefit of people. He said that steps had been taken to formalise insurance for compassion of humans. Insurance was important in different ways but people did not trust the product, he said and added that there was need to bridge the trust gap.

Basic concept behind insurance was community consciousness, he said and added that old age insurance was a state encouraged phenomenon. Dr Arif Alvi said, "Employees Old Age Benefits Institution is a social insurance institute while Benazir Income Support Programme is also a financial support scheme." He said that it was basic function of the government to provide level playing field to all segments of society for better development. The president said that Scandinavian countries get high taxes and give more benefits, adding that if any country follows prejudices, this was not good at all.

He said, "Elite exploitation and capitalism culture actually create unevenness in society." He said that world's few rich people hold almost 50 per cent wealth of the world. Dr Arif Alvi said our beloved Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) taught us about the essence behind charity and he added that alms-giving was all about compassion towards humanity. He said that Islamic laws were community related, adding that Islamic society was all about living in a society where love and care of each other could be practised.

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INSURANCE VITAL FOR WELFARE OF COMMUNITY: DR ARIF ALVI

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He said that he used to think that wherever there was a democracy, there would be compassion towards humanity, but situation in Gaza was totally opposite. He said the world should consider brown and black people equally. The president said that economic deprivations actually make generations lethargic.

Dr Arif Alvi said that it was vital to inform people about Insurance Ombudsman that it was one stop shop for solution to their problems.

He further said that he was also listening to appeals himself, so that backlog could be cleared. Hazrat Umar (RA) taught us that decision of cases of people coming from far-flung areas should be done swiftly, relevant authority should contest case of the poor and uneducated people, decision should be revisited if any wrong was done, and the decisions should be implemented immediately, Arif Alvi said and added that all these guidelines needed to be implemented for provision of justice.

Insurance was contributing 0.85 per cent to the country's GDP, while this percentage was higher in other countries, he added. He said that decisions made by the Insurance Ombudsman should be highlighted to create awareness among people. Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce Vice President Riffat Malik, Federal Insurance Ombudsman Dr Muhammad Khawar Jameel also spoke.



BANKING MOHTASIB

PRESIDENT ARIF ALVI DIRECTS BANK TO REFUND RS 344,600 TO FRAUD VICTIM

The President Dr Arif Alvi has upheld the orders of Banking Mohtasib directing Allied Bank Ltd (ABL) to pay Rs 344,600 to a customer as the amount was fraudulently transferred from his account and the bank had committed maladministration by opening the fund transfer facility without his consent which caused financial loss to the customer. While deciding upon a representation filed by ABL against the decision of the Banking Mohtasib, the President held that the bank failed to discharge the burden and statutory liability cast upon it under the law and that it had committed basic irregularity and non-compliance by activating Internet Banking/Electronic Funds Transfer (IB/EFT) channel without customer consent. In his decision, he observed that although the complainant received a phone call from a number similar to the bank's helpline, after which, a sum of Rs 344,602 was transferred from his account. However, if the IB/EFT facility had not been opened by ABL, the customer could have been saved from the financial loss caused to him with no fault on his part. He pointed out that the complainant had neither requested the IB/EFT facility nor had conducted any transaction through such channels in the past.

Mr Ameer Ali Wasan (the complainant), a citizen of Hyderabad, immediately filed a complaint with the bank after the fraud but his grievance was not resolved. Later, he approached Banking Mohtasib to get a refund of the lost amount. The Mohtasib directed ABL to refund the defrauded amount, but ABL filed a representation with the President against the decision.

The President held a personal hearing of the case and in his decision noted that ABL failed to establish the legitimacy of the disputed transaction in terms of Section 41 of the Payment System and Electronic Funds Transfer Act, 2007. "From the perusal of the record, it is apparent that the transactions were conducted on a single date and almost in a very short span of time and on the same pattern. It could have evoked the alert system of the Bank, to at least call the customer about it. It is a matter of concern to be addressed by the Banks and the regulator, i.e., State Bank of Pakistan", the President noted. He added that the citizen was not conversant with digital banking and did not have adequate knowledge of the present-day banking products based on modern technology.

In view of the facts, the President concluded that IB/EFT was an unsolicited facility and the bank had failed to comply with various binding and mandatory provisions of the Payment Systems and EFT Act 2007 as well as directives issued by the State Bank of Pakistan regarding the opening of such channels. The President, therefore, rejected the representation filed by ABL and directed it to report compliance to BM within 30 days from the date of the order.



FEDERAL TAX OMBUDSMAN

FTO IS FULLY AUTHORIZED TO INITIATE SUO MOTO INVESTIGATION FOR ANY ALLEGED MALADMINISTRATION ON THE PART OF THE REVENUE DIVISION; HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF PAKISTAN.

These various Own Motion investigations were initiated in terms of Section 9(1) of the Federal Tax Ombudsman Ordinance,2000 (FTO Ordinance), because FTO Secretariat had evidence-based information that some of the most meaningful and innovative initiatives of FBR's own officers and field formations stand diluted and washed away due to follow up failure, frequent posting transfers of officers and massive changes of jurisdictions.

Moreover, through In-House Analysis FTO Secretariat has also identified that though FBR and its dozens of fields formations maintain an organized web portal, rich data center, exhaustive Data Bases, elaborate and comprehensive operational softwares and houses a full-fledged & home-grown IT support system i.e., Pakistan Revenue Automation (PVT) LTD (PRAL), yet neither FBRHQs nor its any single field formation maintains: a. any IT based tracking system, archiving various valuable initiatives & ventures made by different FBR's organizations, officers,

A total number of six representations had been filed by Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) as mentioned below: Rep. No.278/FTO/2022 in C. No. 013 1/0M12022. Rep. No.278-AIFTO/2022 in C. No. 0133/OM/2022. Rep. No.279/FTO/2022 in C. No. 0134/OM/2022. Rep. No.2801FTO/2022 in C. No. 0150/OM/2022. Rep. No.2811F10/2022 in C. No. 0151/OM/2022. Rep. No.2821FT0/2022 in C. No. 0156/OM/2022 FTO's in-house analysis was mainly based on investigation reports generated by DG BTB which clearly shows that the above concerns were not declaring the true particulars of Income and were not discharging their responsibilities as withholding agents, especially in respect of Sections 149, 152 and 153.



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FTO IS FULLY AUTHORIZED TO INITIATE SUO MOTO INVESTIGATION FOR ANY ALLEGED MALADMINISTRATION ON THE PART OF THE REVENUE DIVISION; HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF PAKISTAN.

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In order to make out foolproof cases, the total receipts of the said companies were obtained by DG BIB from the data hosted by international Aid Transparency Initiative, which was compared with the declared receipts in the tax returns. Huge discrepancies were observed casting doubt about tax evasion by the above companies. A detailed analysis was provided to the department discussing parameters and extent of tax evasion. However, after disbanding of the Directorate General of Broadening Tax Base, Islamabad office, progress on this case was not known. It seems that the valuable information shared with the field formations was lost in the judgment of a single solicited Bench of Honorable Islamabad High Court dated 07.03.2022 in the said Writ Petition, quite relevant, it had been observed that the honorable judge in chambers observed that FTO may initiate Own Motion proceedings upon information whether or not there is a complaint.

It's been an uphill battle when it comes to making sure women get their fair share, especially in matters of inheritance. Ms. Nabila Khan isn't just a legal expert; she is a fierce advocate, shining a bright light on women's economic and social struggles. By taking on cases that dive into the complexities of inheritance, she's like a superhero championing women's empowerment.

The Khatoon Mohtasib Ms. Nabila Khan, is putting her utmost effort into bringing justice to women. From workplace harassment to property ownership, every woman deserves respect, safety, and autonomy. Let's make these rights a reality, one step at a time. Ms. Nabila Khan's visit is solid proof that she is putting her ultimate effort into bringing justice to women.

Amid workplace harassment, we are here as the defenders of justice, offering support and resolution to those who have faced the darkness of mistreatment. And let's not forget that the right of inheritance given to women by Allah SWT often gets overlooked in the clutches of patriarchal norms. Ms. Nabila's work isn't just about legal procedures; it's a sacred mission to restore what's rightfully ordained, weaving justice into the very fabric of our community.



PUNJAB OMBUDSMAN

Seminar on World Children's Day held at Punjab Ombudsman

The Office of the Ombudsman Punjab marked World Children's Day with a seminar underscoring their commitment to the well-being and rights of children. The seminar was presided over by the Hon'ble Ombudsman Punjab Maj. Azam Suleman Khan (Retd.)(Hilal-i-Imtiaz), and attended by the Advisors of the Head Office in Lahore and members of their teams.

World Children's Day, observed annually by UNICEF, is a powerful day of action for and by children, commemorating the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This day is not simply an occasion to celebrate children for who they are, it also serves as a reminder that children's rights are under threat. Children all over the world are vulnerable to violence, abuse, discrimination and exploitation. The theme of this year's Children's Day, 'For every child, every right', underscores the commitment to uphold the rights of every child.

Following the recitation from Holy Quran, the Honourable Ombudsman welcomed the participants and in his opening remarks, underlined the importance of World Children's Day, as an occasion to celebrate the rights, welfare and potential of children. He talked about the various issues faced by children, such as exploitation, discrimination and violence, and stressed upon the need to work towards the protection of children, highlighting key areas such as education, health, and protection from abuse.

The opening speech was followed by a presentation by Ms. Tabana Sajjad Naseer, the Chief Provincial Commissioner for Children (CPCC), who gave an overview of the Office of the CPCC, highlighting its functions and speaking in detail about its main activities. She spoke about the different kinds of abuse faced by children in Pakistan, emphasising that while laws for child protection were present, their implementation was very weak.

Ms. Tabana stated that our firm commitment towards child protection must go beyond mere rhetoric, resulting in innovative policies to safeguard the fundamental rights of children, and ensuring their implementation with active collaboration with all stakeholders from the public and private sector.



In his closing remarks, the Honourable Ombudsman stated that by taking affirmative action to promote children's rights, we would be ensuring that our future generations are protected and enjoy the freedom to achieve their full potential in life, thereby confirming their productive contribution towards societal progress and development.



PUNJAB OMBUDSPERSON

OMBUDSPERSON PUNJAB HONORABLE MS.NABILA KHAN HELD AWARENESS SESSION

In the global orchestra of #16Days of Activism against gender-based violence (GBV), the Ombudsperson Punjab, under the committed leadership of Ms. Nabila Khan, stands as a beacon of hope in Pakistan. Ms. Nabila Khan raises awareness through public campaigns, workshops, and seminars, empowering communities with knowledge of women's rights, legal frameworks, and available support mechanisms. This education is a potent weapon against GBV, chipping away at the silence and shame that often cloak its victims. But Ms. Nabila Khan doesn't simply raise awareness; she demands accountability. The Ombudsperson Punjab investigates complaints with uncompromising thoroughness, ensuring perpetrators face the full weight of the law. This unwavering pursuit of justice sends a powerful message of deterrence, encouraging victims to come forward with their stories. She actively builds partnerships with government agencies, NGOs, and civil society organisations, weaving a comprehensive network for GBV prevention and response. This collaborative spirit ensures no corner of Punjab is left unaddressed.

Her vision doesn't stop at protection; Ms. Nabila Khan also champions empowerment. The Ombudsperson Punjab tackles the root causes of GBV by working tirelessly to fulfil women's economic potential. Their work on the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010 and the Punjab Enforcement of Women's Property Right Act 2021 empowers women to control their destinies and claim their rightful place in society. Ms. Nabila Khan as



Ombudsperson, Punjab and this department is more than just an office; they are a symbol of hope, a testament to the unwavering fight against GBV. But the fight is far from over. We, the people, must join the chorus, amplify Ms. Nabila Khan's voice, and raise our own in the fight against GBV. Together, we can build a society where every woman feels safe, respected, and free.



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SINDH OMBUDSMAN

MOU SIGNED BETWEEN THE PROVINCIAL OMBUDSMAN SINDH AND CHIEF OMBUDSMAN OF THAILAND

The high point of Thai Ombudsman visit to Pakistan was the signing of MoU at the Chief Minister Secretariat. The MoU seeks to establish and strengthen cooperation between the parties in order to improve their systems of handling complaints, exchange experiences, collaboration in areas of common interest and resolve the maladministration of government agencies.

Signing of the MOU ushers a new era of understanding and cooperation between the two institutions of friendly countries of Pakistan and Thailand.





OMBUDSMAN BALOCHISTAN

OPEN COURT (KHULI KACHHEHRI) ORGANIZED IN SUBURBS OF QUETTA

In a proactive move to address community grievances and ensure swift access to justice, the Ombudsman Balochistan Mr. Nazar Muhammad Baloch orchestrated an open court session at Nawan Killi in Quetta. The event gained added significance with the presence and participation of the Associate Advisor Wafaqi Mohtasib Regional Office Quetta Mr. Ghulam Sarwar Brohi, highlighting the collaborative effort between provincial and federal bodies to directly engage with citizen concerns. The joint initiative between the Ombudsman Balochistan Mr. Nazar Muhammad Baloch and the Associate Advisor Wafaqi Mohtasib brought the justice-seeking platform even closer to the local community. This event was designed to facilitate direct interaction between residents and the representatives from both offices, showcasing a unified commitment to resolve administrative issues and address grievances effectively. At the session, individuals from Nawan Killi and surrounding areas were given a unique opportunity to voice their concerns directly to the officials. The presence of both provincial and federal representatives underlined a synchronized effort to hear and resolve the grievances brought forth by the community.

The collaboration between the Ombudsman Balochistan and the Regional Office Wafaqi Mohtasib Quetta emphasized a comprehensive approach towards ensuring justice and fairness at the grassroots level. By leveraging their combined expertise and resources, these bodies aimed to not only address immediate issues but also identify systemic challenges that required attention and reform.

The participation of the Associate Advisor Wafaqi Mohtasib alongside the Ombudsman Balochistan added weight to the event, signifying a joint commitment to uphold the rights of citizens and streamline administrative processes for their benefit. The session served as a testament to the importance of inter-agency cooperation in resolving grievances and fostering trust in governmental institutions. This collaborative effort, bridging the provincial and federal bodies, showcased a model of synergy in addressing citizen concerns. It highlighted the significance of concerted action, collective responsibility, and the spirit of partnership in ensuring justice and fairness for all residents, setting a precedent for collaborative initiatives in the pursuit of a more responsive and accountable governance system.



KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA OMBUDSMAN

Seminar on Provincial Ombudsman's Role and Responsibilities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Under the supervision of the Provincial Ombudsman of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, an awareness seminar was conducted regarding the roles and responsibilities of the ombudsman. Peshawar: The seminar had special guest participation from the Provincial Minister of Law and Human Rights, Justice Retired Syed Arshad Hussain Shah.

Peshawar: Officials, including Provincial Ombudsman Jamaluddin Shah, and administrators associated with Peshawar, actively participated in the seminar.

Peshawar: The ombudsman is actively working to ensure justice for the public without any remuneration. Justice Retired Syed Arshad Hussain, Provincial Minister of Law, stated, "Our efforts should focus on facilitating conveniences for the people."

Peshawar: Citizens can lodge complaints against any maladministration by any provincial department with the Provincial Ombudsman. Complaint resolution is ensured within six months. Peshawar: The seminar provided detailed insights into the Provincial Ombudsman's functions, and comprehensive answers were given to participants' questions.





OMBUDSPERSON OFFICE, KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

E-Khuli Kachehri held at Ombudsperson Office Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

"E-Kuli Kachehri was conducted under the direction of the worthy Minister, Law, Parliamentary Affairs, and Human Rights Department at the Ombudsperson Office on November 10, 2023. A total of 13 complaints were received from this office: 03 through a Google form, 02 on the helpline, and 08 through online comments. The Worthy Ombudsperson carefully entertained the complaints and grievances of the participants, and gave direction and guidance to the participants accordingly. An interactive awareness session related to the 'Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010' was held by Ms. Nuzhat Taskeen (Legal Officer) on November 14, 2023, at Govt Post Graduate College Saidu Sharif (Swat). The session was fruitful, and students took a keen interest in it. The presenter responded to almost all questions of the participants to quench their thirst for getting information about the harassment act.

Furthermore, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University Peshawar organized a Female Literacy Festival from November 6th to 10th, 2023. Ms. Nuzhat Taskin, the legal officer of this office, delivered a session on women harassment at the workplace at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University Peshawar on November 7, 2023.



Apart from that, awareness sessions were conducted by Ms. Sabiha Iqbal, legal officer in Edwards College Peshawar, Govt Higher Secondary School Pakha Ghulam, Govt Girls School Dir Colony, and Govt Middle School Gulab.



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OMBUDSMAN OFFICE AJ&K

OMBDUSMAN AJK HELD AN OPEN COURT AT ATHMUQAM, DISTRICT NEELUM AJ&K

The Ombudsman of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Muhammad Naseem held a public open court in the Neelum Valley AJK. During the open court at PWD Guest House, Athmuqam, the complaints of the people were heard and orders were issued on the spot to solve the problems that needed immediate solution. Ombudsman also assured the hearing on the written request regarding several issues reported by the people.



Meanwhile, Ombudsman Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Mohammad Naseem visited Muridke Lahore on 30 October 2023 wherein a large number of people participated and conveyed their problems/grievances to Ombudsman Azad Jammu and Kashmir.





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Ombudsman Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Mohammad Naseem held a hearing/record inspection on redressal of public grievances against Electricity Department in District Bhimbar on October 28, 2023. The Secretary Ombudsman Secretariat, Absar Hussain Jaral and the Director Ombudsman Secretariat, Chaudhry Muhammad Mubarak were also accompanied by the Ombudsman of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.



Ombudsman Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Mohammad Naseem along with Secretary Ombudsman Secretariat and Director Investigation visited the site on October 28, 2023 and passed orders for immediate redressal of public grievances in Bhimber.

